GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:234
ANSWERED ON:13.08.2007
PROLONGED COUNTER, INSURGENCY OPERATIONS
Adhalrao Patil Shri Shivaji;Adsul Shri Anandrao Vithoba

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether prolonged counter-insurgency operations, with little time for rest and recuperation, are causing heavy toll on the physical endurance and mental health of soldiers; and

(b) the steps taken for the welfare of the soldiers?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY)

(a) & (b): Deployment in counter insurgency operations entails some element of stress to the soldiers. Several measures have been taken by the Government and the Services for the welfare of soldiers. Some of them are:

(i) Better man management and prompt attendance of grievances at Unit level.
(ii) Improved accessibility of leaders and frequent interaction of junior leaders with the soldiers.
(iii) Junior Commissioned Officers and Non Commissioned Officers have been trained and deployed as psychological counsellors.
(iv) The training capsules on relaxation techniques including Yoga and Pranayam have been introduced.
(v) Leave policy has been liberalized permitting splitting of annual leave and casual leave. The troops will now be able to go to their home towns on leave thrice a year instead of twice a year earlier.
(vi) Rotation of units and individuals to minimize exposure to stress.
(vii) A helpline with toll free number has been established.
(viii) Arrangements have been made for identification and counselling of persons who are at higher combat stress by Regimental Medical Officers, Junior leaders and unit commanders.
(ix) Grant of additional rail warrant to all ranks of armed forces serving in field/counter insurgency counter terrorist operational areas.
(x) Rationalization of scheme for LTC for both officers and Personnel Below Officer Ranks (PBORs) allowing availing of home travel concession even for visit to selected place of residence (SPR) of family and removal of restriction of ceiling of 1450 kms for availing all India LTC.
(xi) Grant of High Altitude (Uncongenial Climate) (HAUC) allowance at enhanced rates to troops deployed in more difficult, hazardous isolated areas with the existing HAUC areas.